

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting
February 2021 – March 2021

The Besser Museum continues to follow CDC health guidelines until further notice.

- The Besser Museum will be opened for self-guided tours from 10 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Visitor capacity continues to be limited to 25 people in the building at a time. Planetarium capacity is limited to a maximum of 15 people in the planetarium at a time.
- CDC guidelines are still in place: masks, social distancing, disinfecting.
- Attendance is picking up. Saturday and Sundays are especially seeing more visitors.
- Our \$46,500 Paycheck Protection Program loan application was approved.
- We are working on filing an employee tax credit. If approved, we will be refunded approximately \$23,000.

ONGOING PROJECTS

FACILITY:

- **HVAC: Mechanical Phase of Renovation Project**
 - March 15th: R.S. Scott sent out an invitation to several contractors to bid on installing the new chiller unit and a humidifier unit.
 - March 23rd: Contractors are invited to do a walk through and ask questions about the project.
 - April 9th: Deadline for contractors to submit their bids.
 - April 20th: Susan Edwards will present the best bid to the Board of Trustees for their consideration.
- **HVAC: Controller Phase of the Renovation Project**
 - The computer that maintains the HVAC control system will be obsolete in July and will no longer be able to receive updates. (think Microsoft 10).
 - A separate vendor handles the controls. The controls communicate between the chillers, boilers and air handler and regulates the temperature and humidity throughout the building. We have been having issues with our control system for several years now. Updating the Control System is part of the overall project.
 - We (I and R.S. Scott) have been trying to work with the current vendor, AirNenergy, so we can get the specs on what is in the museum so that we can bid this portion of the job out at the same time we put in the new mechanical units. The new mechanical units will need to be hooked up to the control systems for everything to work. There has been some reluctance from the vendor to provide the museum this information.
 - We are also seeking a bid from another company for the control system. We hope to have this bid for the April 20th meeting.

HISTORIC VILLAGE:

- **Log Cabin project:** The contract with Robert Kenel LLC has been signed and a payment of \$31,000 was made to Bob Kenel to start the project. The logs have been ordered. He will start sometime in April.
 - The Alpena City Building Permit was pulled for the project. The cost of the permit was \$410.

GREAT LAKES FISHERIES HERITAGE EXHIBIT:

- **Chinook**
 - We had to reschedule our meeting with the City Planner, Andrea Kares. We hope to reschedule soon.
 - We have been attempting to speak to employees in the DNR grant program concerning their Invasive Species Grant. The grant will not be opened until August or September.
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ANISHINAABE EXHIBIT REVITALIZATION PROJECT (Native American Gallery)

- Consultant, Charlee Brissette began work on Phase 2 January 2021.
- The first Anishinaabe Advisory Committee met on February 23rd.
- The next meeting will be held March 30th.
- Anne Belanger and I are traveling with Charlee to check out two Anishinaabe exhibits. One in St. Ignace and one in Sault Saint Marie.

ART: Wilson Art Gallery Renovation:

- The renovation of the Wilson Gallery is going well.
- The modular walls are installed.
- Local interior designer, Pam O'Neil, helped choose colors for the walls. Painting is almost complete. We are putting up some extra paneling in the corner that has plywood. That will need to be painted.
- The new hanging system will be installed next.
- The flooring will be installed in the next few weeks.
- A special recognition to the Besser Foundation will be created and installed.
- Besser Foundation granted permission to purchase new art with the leftover funds. We are looking into acquiring another piece of Chihuly if possible.
- Local artist, Brian Schorn, has started working on curating the first exhibit and initiating a Fine Art advisory committee.
- We hope to open to the public at the end of May.
- We should think about hosting a grand opening and inviting all past board members and Besser Foundation Board members.

ARTIFACT COLLECTIONS: Major work continues in the collection storage areas.

- **PastPerfect Data Software**
 - Sarah is continuing to work with volunteers to inventory and properly store the collection of rolled maps and documents.
 - Sarah handles questions from the public at large, conducts research, and continues to organize objects, artifacts and documents found throughout the museum.
- **Temporary Custody donations**
 - Sarah started holding virtual meetings to address the temporary custody items.
 - This work will be ongoing as there is a backlog of Temporary Custody donations.

MISCELLENOUS:

- **Education Outreach:**
 - Both Johnathan and Amanda continue to produce virtual education programs that are reaching large audiences on our social media platforms.
 - Attendance in the planetarium has been gradually picking up on the weekends.
- **Guest Services:**
 - Katrina Brooks (Guest Services/Administrative Assistant) has updated the museum website. Katrina will now start working on revising our online store.
 - Katrina set up the online voting for our New Beginnings People Choice. We have received over \$297 in votes from online voting so far.
 - Matt, Katrina, and Amanda have been working on inventorying the gift store in preparation for tourist season. The store is normally restocked for the summer tourist season.